



Early Childhood Australia
A voice for young children

**OUR
VISION:
EVERY
YOUNG
CHILD IS
THRIVING
AND
LEARNING**

MEDIA RELEASE

Saturday 8 October 2022

2022 ECA NATIONAL CONFERENCE CONCLUDES WITH HON DR ANNE ALY AND HON JULIA GILLARD AC IN ATTENDANCE

The three-day 2022 Early Childhood Australia (ECA) National Conference concluded in Canberra today with Hon Julia Gillard AC and Australian Minister for Early Childhood Education Hon Dr Anne Aly addressing the sector. More than 100 Australian and international speakers and panellists spoke to the theme of 'Passion to power: Our future profession' and addressed over 2200 delegates from the early childhood education and care sector, who attended both in-person and virtually.

The dates for next year's conference have also been announced for 4–7 October 2023; it will be held in Adelaide, South Australia.

Other key ministers, including Hon Jason Clare MP and Ms Yvette Berry MLA, and keynote speakers Dylan Alcott AO, Dr Laura Jana and Dean Parkin, also appreciated the delegates for their contribution as early childhood education professionals.

Hon Julia Gillard AC gave a powerful keynote address and appeared in conversation with SNAICC CEO Catherine Liddle, where she spoke about the importance of investing in early childhood education and care, gender equality, closing the gap and effective funding models for early education.

She lauded the current government for being measured in its approach and shared that early childhood education and care reform requires thought, planning and confrontation, followed by driving the reform through. Her message to the delegates was reassuring as she said, 'I am absolutely convinced we are headed in the right direction. Many important things have changed and if we were capable of changing those things, then we're capable of doing the rest together. This is a journey of work for women in the lead but also for the men who support us, because a gender-equal world would be a better world for everyone, and that's certainly worth fighting for.'

Min Aly made references to her own lived experiences highlighting the importance of access to early childhood education and care – emphasising the need for all children need to have high quality early learning opportunities. She also highlighted the value of early childhood education for children and putting children at the centre of it. She said, 'Early childhood education is vital to a child's progress and no child born into any form of disadvantage should have to carry that disadvantage through life. Early childhood education is the way for us to achieve true quality for a substantive equality for children in Australia.'

Min Aly also spoke briefly about the Early Years Strategy which will have a focus on holistic education and care including child health and wellbeing, and addressing workforce issues with sustainable and long-term reforms.

ECA also presented awards to standout researchers and advocates in the sector to honour their contributions to the lives of young children, early childhood practice and the early childhood profession.

- ECA Doctoral Thesis Award: Dr Amelia Ruscoe
- Barbara Creaser Lecture Award: Ros Cornish
- Barbara Creaser Young Advocate Award: Emma Cross
- Barbara Creaser Champion Award: Wendy McDuff

It is ECA's intention that delegates leave the conference with a renewed sense of hope and optimism for the future. We know the difference this profession makes in the lives of young children's development, wellbeing and life trajectories. The conference has certainly renewed ECA's resolve to continue to work to ensure that the sector's effort is met with the recognition they deserve.

Early Childhood Australia would like to thank its [sponsors](#) for their generous support in making this conference a success.

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ECA CEO Samantha Page is available for comment. For interviews, please contact ECA Media Officer Reshma Jayesh on 0475 554 999.

For a downloadable PDF version of the media release, please click here:
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Early Childhood Australia is the peak advocacy body for children from birth to eight years, their families and early childhood professionals.